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One Hundred Years of Foreign Missions

Historical Sketch



One Hundred Years of Foreign Missions

Historical Sketch
of the Board of Foreign Missions
Reformed (Dutch) Church 1832-1932

by
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One Hundred Years of Foreign Missions

1832-1932

IT IS unnecessary in a brief sketch of this kind to enumerate all of those qualities in the Dutch character which have led to the up-building, from small, unpromising and often precarious beginnings, of the solid, imposing and enduring structure which we call today the Foreign Missionary Work of the Dutch Reformed Church. Courage, steadfastness, piety and zeal are conspicuous among them. Caution and thrift have not been wanting. But the quality which most impresses the careful searcher for the sources of Dutch achievement is that which we call vision. We do not, as a rule, associate it with the character of the Dutch. Conservative, cautious, slow, are the adjectives with which we commonly describe them. But no one who thoughtfully studies the history of Holland in Europe, in Asia, in the West Indies, in New Netherland, can fail to see that the record was made by men who saw and sought the invisible. Examination into their manner of conducting their foreign enterprises shows them to have had that high sense of duty to God and man which is found only in men whose thoughts range beyond the here and now. The men of the United Provinces were moved with compassion for the benighted. East and West India Companies abroad, Government and Church at home united in a conscientious, persistent effort to supply their distant settlements with men dedicated to the difficult task of physical and spiritual redemption.

The documents of the Classis of Amsterdam and the Colonial documents of New York and New Jersey amply attest this statement. In the history of our colonial times frequent references are made to the efforts of the Dutch to promote the spiritual welfare of their colonists.

Dutch East India Company

The labors of the Classis of Amsterdam in the care of its churches in Asia alone must have been enormous. By the year 1620 the East India Company had established churches in Ceylon, Sumatra, Java,

China, Formosa, Siam, Japan and many adjacent islands and dependencies. Portions of the Bible and Catechism had been translated into many Eastern tongues. Between the years 1615 and 1725, more than three hundred ministers, some as pastors to the colonists, some as missionaries to the heathen, had been sent out from The Netherlands to the Dutch East Indies. While the Government of Holland was undertaking long and exhausting wars for the preservation of civil and religious liberty at home, the Church of Holland was expending untold labor and lives for the welfare of thousands abroad.

Dutch West India Company

Through the Dutch West India Company, the Church of Holland sent many ministers to work among the negroes of Cape Colony in Africa. Early in the 17th Century, it began work in the New World, sending ministers and missionaries to the West Indies and South America, urging upon them the necessity of evangelizing the natives. In New Netherland the Gospel was preached to the Indians, wherever possible, and prayers for their conversion to Christianity were regularly offered in the churches.

Johannes Megapolensis, 1642–1670

The Rev. Johannes Megapolensis may well be classed among the pioneer missionaries of the Dutch Church. He was the first Protestant missionary to the Indians, his labors among the Mohawks preceding by several years those of John Eliot among the Indians of the Massachusetts Colony. Born in Holland in 1601, and coming to New Netherland in 1642, under a contract with Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, he served for six years as minister in the church at Rensselaerswyck (Albany), during which time he exerted a marked influence.

There is a gap of more than one hundred years between the labors of Megapolensis and the beginning of what may properly be called Foreign Missions in America. The colonies and the churches were absorbed during the 18th century in establishing for themselves a secure and permanent foothold in the New World. The struggle for independence had to be fought and won. It is not surprising that, in the stress of the great needs at home, little thought should have been given to the welfare of peoples beyond the seas.

Modern Missions

Modern Missions had their birth in the last decade of the 18th century. While France was in the throes of its "Reign of Terror," the lands of the Reformation were organizing for the conversion of the world to Christianity. It was in 1793, the most crucial year of the French Revolution, that Carey sailed for India and became the pioneer of modern missions. In 1795 began in London that series of missionary meetings which led to the formation, in a period of less than seven years, of seven of the great British Missionary Societies. The echoes of this movement were heard and felt in all Protestant lands, and, reaching the shores of the New World, deeply moved the evangelical churches.

New York Missionary Society, 1796–1816

The earliest definite participation of the Reformed Church in America in modern missionary work was its union with the Presbyterians and Baptists in the founding, in November, 1796, of the New York Missionary Society. This was organized for the preaching of the Gospel to the Indians, and in its first list of officers we find the names of prominent members of the Dutch Church, among them those of the Rev. Dr. John H. Livingston and the Rev. John N. Abeel. The meetings were held alternately in the Baptist, Presbyterian and Dutch Churches, and were remarkable for the spirit of union and fellowship which they displayed. It is interesting, in the light of the trend today towards inter-denominational co-operation in the work of foreign missions, to note that the same spirit actuated the men who laid, in this country, their foundations. Nor should the fact be overlooked that the cautious and conservative Dutch Church was in the vanguard of the movement.

Under the auspices of the New York Society a series of missionary sermons was preached which powerfully aroused the already active missionary spirit in the churches. Notable among these were two discourses by Dr. Livingston, one delivered in 1799 upon the text, "Christ Is All in All," and a second in 1804 upon the "Everlasting Gospel." These sermons were printed and widely circulated, producing so profound an impression that their reverberations are heard to this day. As a result of the appeals made and the sermons preached, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the parent of all the other denominational boards, was founded in 1810.

Society of Inquiry, 1811

It seems strange that the Dutch Church in America should have continued not only to exist, but, in the main, to flourish for more than one hundred years before provision was made for the training, in this country, of its ministers. It was not until 1784 that its Theological Seminary, the first, however, to be established in this country, was founded in New York, with Dr. Livingston as its first Professor. No account of the origins of the foreign missionary work of the Dutch Church can ignore the large influence in promoting its beginnings of this famous divine. The Theological Seminary was removed to New Brunswick, N. J., in 1810, and in 1811 its students, under the inspiration of Dr. Livingston's zeal, established the Berean Society, in which discussions upon the subject of foreign missions held the chief place. In 1820 the name of the Society was changed to "The Society of Inquiry," the purpose of which was "to obtain and circulate religious intelligence, to correspond with similar societies in other seminaries and with missionaries, domestic and foreign, and to diffuse among ourselves a zeal for the missionary cause." This Society has continued, practically without intermission, to the present time, and has been a fruitful source of missionary enthusiasm, sending out from its membership many notable foreign missionaries and inspiring ministers in the Church at home to take a deep interest in the cause. Among those who profoundly influenced the Society in its early years were John Scudder and David Abeel, the latter a graduate of the Seminary, and both missionaries of the Dutch Church. Dr. Abeel's influence over the students was deep and lasting, and it led in 1836 to the departure of the first missionary group from the seminary, composed of Messrs. Doty, Nevius, Youngblood and Ennis, who went out in that year to the Borneo Mission.

The United Missionary Society, 1816-1826

In 1816 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church invited the General Synod of the Reformed Church "to appoint commissioners to meet commissioners of the General Assembly for the purpose of arranging a plan for the formation of a Society for Foreign Missions." This led to the organization of the United Missionary Society, "composed of the Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed and Associate Reformed Churches, and all others who may choose to join with them." The object of the New Society was "to spread the Gospel among the Indians of

North America, the inhabitants of Mexico and South America and in other portions of the heathen and anti-Christian world." Missionaries were "elected from the three churches indiscriminately," and for the first time the Reformed Church definitely committed itself to the task of carrying the Gospel to foreign lands. The New York Missionary Society was merged in 1821 in the United Society.

John Scudder, 1819

It was in the period of the United Missionary Society that the first foreign missionary of the Dutch Church, Dr. John Scudder, a member of the Franklin Street Church, abandoned a lucrative medical practice in New York City and went out to India under the American Board as its first medical missionary. Nothing in the annals of modern missions is more remarkable than the story of this extraordinary man. Born in 1793 of a line of patriotic ancestors, he was equipped by nature with a vigorous intellect and great decision of character. Having passed through a spiritual conflict of no ordinary kind, he early developed a passion for saving souls. He was active in religious work, and his profession was carried on hand in hand with religion as the great healing power. While calling one day upon a patient, he picked up in an anteroom a tract on "The Conversion of the World, or the Claims of Six Hundred Millions." Instantly his duty was plain and his decision made. The American Board was just then calling for a medical missionary for India. Dr. Scudder offered his services, was accepted, and sailed, with his wife and child, for Calcutta in June, 1819. From Calcutta Dr. Scudder proceeded to Ceylon, where his work met with great success. In 1836 he removed to Madras to take charge of a printing-press for issuing the Scriptures and tracts in Tamil and, in the course of a few years, had scattered the Truth in millions of leaflets. While in Madras, Dr. Scudder became largely an itinerating missionary, preaching and healing in every large town in that part of the Presidency. He, with his sons, was the founder in 1853 of the Arcot Mission of the Dutch Church. As a physician, he was skillful; as a surgeon, intrepid, unflinching. Excessive work brought on serious illness, and in 1854 he sailed with one of his sons for the Cape of Good Hope, which it was thought might restore him to health. He had taken his return passage to India, and was about to embark when a stroke of apoplexy ended his life on January 13, 1855.

We have said, "ended his life," but if ever the "endless life" has had on earth an illustration, it has had it in Dr. John Scudder. Seven sons, eleven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren have followed him in the missionary fields of the Dutch Church. He himself gave thirty-six years of life to the missionary cause, but he and his descendants have given to it, altogether, more than one thousand years. Dr. John Scudder's missionary record as a physician, a surgeon, a printer of *The Word*, a preacher of the Gospel, a founder of missions, forms one of the most notable chapters in the history of the Dutch Church. But his greatest claim to distinction lies in none of these things. It lies in the fact that he has lighted in three generations of his descendants the divine fire of the missionary spirit.

David Abeel, 1829

Like the men of Amsterdam who more than two hundred years before had had the vision of Asia and Africa and America brought to the feet of Christ, like Livingston and Scudder in his own time, David Abeel now began a campaign for foreign missions which was, in the course of his short life, to arouse an interest and exert an influence destined to endure for many years.

David Abeel was born in New Brunswick, N. J., in 1804, the son of David Abeel and Jane Hassert, and a nephew of the Rev. John N. Abeel, a prominent minister in the Dutch Church. Disappointed in his effort to enter the Military Academy at West Point, he decided to study medicine, but, coming under the influence of Dr. Livingston, he entered the New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1823, from which time the missionary spirit became dominant in his life. Determining in spite of delicate health to go as a foreign missionary, he enlisted for one year in the service of the Seamen's Friend Society, to go out to Canton to work among the sailors in that port. At the end of the year he was to enter the service of the American Board. He sailed for China in 1829, and until his death in 1846 was literally a voice crying in the wilderness. He was transferred to the American Board in 1830, and while in its service made extensive trips into Java, Malacca, Siam and adjacent islands. He returned to America on account of failing health in 1833, and, still pursuing the purpose of his life, he visited Holland, France and Switzerland, to form, as he said, "Some kind of connection between the churches at home and in Holland, with a view of co-operating in foreign missions." While in England he was the means of

the organization in 1834 of the first Woman's Foreign Missionary Society ever founded for definite, independent work in foreign lands. His is the name associated more than any other with the beginnings, in every denomination, of women's work for women in the Far East. Dr. Abeel was a century ahead of his time in his vision of what was needed for the Christian conquest of the world. His appeal was not first, nor even primarily, to the ministers and theological students of his day. His voice rang out clearly one hundred years ago its call to the College Student Volunteer. With all the earnestness of his far-seeing mind, he cried out in his Journal: "The work of evangelizing the world demands more than the labors of the ordained missionary. There must be teachers, physicians, merchants, in places mechanics—Christian communities who can employ all the various means by which the heathen world may be influenced." His was, at the outset, the clear-sighted, statesmanlike grasp of the need of all the forces of a Christian civilization for the accomplishment of the task to which he had set himself—a need which it has taken the church a century to fully realize.

Organization of the Board of Foreign Missions, 1832

Co-operation with the American Board, 1832–1857

There can be no doubt that the voices of such men as Livingston, Scudder and Abeel had made a powerful impression. Though there were those who felt that it was of "very doubtful expediency" for the Church to spend itself upon missions abroad, there were others who thought the time had come for the Dutch Church to exercise a larger leadership in foreign missions. The Particular Synods of New York and Albany, the only ones in existence at that time, and hence comprising the membership of the whole Church, recommended the subject in 1832 "to the immediate and prayerful consideration of the General Synod." A number of convincing reasons were presented for the assuming, by the denomination, of a greater degree of responsibility in carrying out our Lord's last command. The contributions of the Dutch churches were being used for the support of Congregational missions, and no steps were being taken for the establishment of missions of their own. John Scudder and David Abeel were working under the American Board, and the time seemed ripe for a forward movement towards more independent organization. But, while seeking a larger responsibility,

the Church felt the need of the experience of the older Board, and a committee was appointed by the Synod to confer with the American Board about forming with it such a system of co-operation "as would enable us to maintain a foreign mission of our own, and, at the same time, avail ourselves of all their experience." The American Board cordially assented, and a Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Dutch Church, consisting of fifteen members—nine ministers and six laymen—was organized by the General Synod in October, 1832, the decision to proceed to such organization having been reached in the previous June Session of General Synod. The contributions of the churches were to be applied to the support of missionaries of their own church, or to such missionaries and objects as were recommended by the Board.

Borneo Mission, 1836–1849

In 1834 David Abeel visited Holland, and after interviews with men of influence there he recommended to the church here that it should establish a mission in one of the East Indian colonies of The Netherlands. Borneo was the field chosen. It was while Dr. Abeel was in America in 1836 that a great revival of religion took place in New Brunswick, N. J., during which not only all of the churches but the college and seminary students were profoundly affected. Dr. Abeel's impassioned appeals for the sending of missionaries to heathen lands made a deep impression upon the seminary students, and in the year 1836 three members of the graduating class of that year and one of the preceding year offered themselves for the foreign field. These young men were, as we have already seen, Elihu Doty, Elbert Nevius, William Youngblood and Jacob Ennis. The young men were ordained in the Middle Collegiate Church, in New York, in May, 1836, and the whole party sailed during the session of General Synod in that year.

In 1838 the Revs. William J. Pohlman and Frederick B. Thompson were sent out, in 1840 the Revs. W. T. Van Doren and Isaac P. Stryker, and in 1842 the Rev. Wm. H. Steele. The death of Mr. Stryker and the failing health of other members of the mission led to discouragements, and the departure of Messrs. Pohlman and Doty for China in 1844 further depleted the staff. Mr. Steele came home to seek reinforcements, but, no one volunteering, the Borneo Mission was abandoned in 1849.

Amoy Mission, China, 1842

The Amoy Mission was founded in 1842 by David Abeel. The Treaty of Nanking in 1842 following the capture of Amoy by the British in 1841 concluded the Opium War, and opened to foreigners the five ports of Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai. Dr. Abeel had landed at Amoy six months before the treaty was concluded. In consequence of ill health, he returned to America in 1844, but not until Messrs. Pohlman and Doty had arrived from Borneo to carry on his work. Mr. Doty remained an effective member of the mission until 1864, when he embarked for America and died before reaching New York. Mr. Pohlman's life was cut short in 1849 by shipwreck, but his monument has stood in Amoy from that day to this. It is the Sin-koe-a Church, the first erected in China by Protestants for Chinese worship. The money for the building was raised in the United States, and Mr. Pohlman carefully superintended the building, which was completed in 1849, the dedication service becoming also Mr. Pohlman's funeral service.

The Rev. Daniel Rapalje joined the mission in 1858 and the Rev. Leonard W. Kip in 1861, both efficient and influential missionaries in the mission's early years. But the name most prominently associated with the Amoy Mission in its formative period is that of Rev. John Van Nest Talmage. He was born in 1819, and was ordained to the ministry in 1846. He went out to the Amoy Mission in 1847, and was for forty-five years the guiding spirit in its councils and the determining voice in its decisions. Two monuments in China today attest his scholarship and wisdom. The first is the Character-Colloquial Dictionary, prepared and completed by him, a work which has been of priceless service to the missionaries and the Chinese Christian Church. To him, too, belongs the credit of the Romanized Colloquial, which has enabled thousands to read who could never otherwise have had a first-hand knowledge of the Scriptures. His other and even greater contribution was to the native church in China. Dr. Talmage stoutly withstood every effort to impose denominational lines upon the Chinese Church. Maintaining that it should have an independent existence of its own, he fought valiantly for the principle that it should be self-governing and self-supporting, a principle now universally approved. Dr. Talmage lived to near the close of his century, and when he, the last of the pioneers, had withdrawn, there were in Amoy, connected with our mission alone, 1,400

converts, eleven organized churches, forty-seven preaching places, eleven ordained pastors wholly supported by their own churches, a theological seminary, two boarding schools for boys, five boarding schools for women and girls and three hospitals. To these pioneers was given the glorious task of laying the solid foundation upon which other men in later years have reared the noble structure which we see today.

Arcot Mission, India, 1853

In 1847 the Reformed Church Board was asked by the Prudential Committee of the American Board "to consider the expediency of undertaking a mission among the Tamil-speaking people of Southern India and in the neighborhood of the Madras Mission, to be composed entirely of missionaries from the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church." Dr. John Scudder had been touring the district adjacent to Madras since 1836. His eldest son, Henry Martyn, had been in India since 1844, and in Madras since 1846. The second son, William Waterbury, had gone out to the Jaffna Mission, Ceylon, in 1846. The third son, Joseph, was preparing to join his older brothers. The time seemed ripe for a denominational advance, and the Dutch Board resolved to establish a separate mission in India. In 1853 the three brothers and their father petitioned the Particular Synod of New York to allow them to organize as a classis, and the Arcot District having been chosen as the field of labor and the consent of the Synod obtained, the "American Arcot Mission" was founded in 1853, and the "Classis of Arcot" was regularly constituted the following year. Vellore, with Arcot (Ranipettai) as its outstation, Chittoor and Arni were selected as the original stations of the new mission. In 1856 two more Scudder brothers, Ezekiel Carman and Jared Waterbury, joined the mission; in 1860, Silas Downer Scudder, M.D., and in 1861, the seventh and youngest of the brothers, John Scudder, Jr., M.D.

In 1857 the Rev. Joseph Mayou had arrived, and in 1860 the Rev. Jacob Chamberlain. Palmaner, a station on the Telugu plateau, was opened in 1859. In 1863 the Rev. Jacob Chamberlain removed to Madanapalle, in the Cuddapah district, and that station was added to the number. In 1861-2 the work at Arni had extended so far southward that it was thought advisable to open another station in that part of the Tamil field. Tindivanam, seventeen miles to the east and nearer the sea, was finally selected as the South Arcot headquarters station,

and was occupied in 1875 by the Rev. John H. Wyckoff. Thus were successively established the principal stations of the mission.

The results of the first fifty years of labor in the Arcot Mission cannot be easily tabulated. At the end of the century the Gospel had been preached in nearly every village and hamlet in the Arcot and Cuddapah districts, and millions of Tamil and Telugu people had heard the Christian message. Seventy-four churches had been organized, with 2,500 communicants, and a Christian community of 10,000 persons had come into existence. The contributions of the native Christians had amounted to \$1,773, no small sum in a country where wages were only a few cents a day. One hundred and sixty schools, with 5,000 pupils, had been established. Thirteen native pastors and 500 native assistants were associated with the mission. The academic and theological departments of the Arcot Academy had become, respectively, the Elizabeth R. Voorhees College and the Arcot Theological Seminary. The movement in Southern India which was to result in the South India United Church, a union of Presbyterian, Congregational and Dutch Reformed ecclesiastical bodies, was well under way. Nor was the change in the attitude of the masses towards the Christian community less marked. Caste was relaxing many of its age-old customs. Hindus were discussing female education, widow remarriage and other needed reforms. Faith in Indian creeds, philosophies and customs was being shaken, and the Sun of Righteousness was visibly beginning to shine in India.

Independent Action, 1857

Co-operation continued with the American Board with undiminished harmony until the year 1857. The contributions of the Dutch churches were employed to support the work in China and India. The missionaries were members of the Reformed Church, and there was nothing in the conduct of the American or the Dutch Board to lead to a separation. It was, however, a fact that union with a board having so large a constituency and such extensive resources in men and money, tended to lessen the sense of responsibility in the Dutch churches. These contributed, on the whole, all that was expended in support of the Dutch Missions. Nevertheless, deficiencies could be, and sometimes were, made up from the general funds. The Board of Foreign Missions, convinced that the time had come for independent action, recommended "that the General Synod conduct their foreign missions in an independent

manner." Dr. Isaac Ferris, president of the Dutch Board, and Dr. Talbot W. Chambers, chairman of the Committee on Foreign Missions, earnestly advocated the change. A satisfactory agreement was reached between the two Boards, and they dissolved their partnership in 1857 with hearty expressions of mutual good-will.

The Board was reorganized with twenty-four members, and was incorporated by the Legislature of New York State in 1860. The Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen was chosen its first president, and Dr. Isaac Ferris its first corresponding secretary. The support of the Amoy and Arcot Missions was assumed, and a call was at once issued to "qualified young men" to offer themselves for missionary work under the reorganized board.

Japan Mission, 1859

In 1858 a treaty was signed with Japan by which missionaries were permitted to enter the country. Among the first to come in 1859 were two from the Reformed Church, the Rev. Samuel R. Brown, who settled in Yokohama, and the Rev. Guido F. Verbeck, who took up his residence in Nagasaki. The founders of the Japan Mission were the following: Rev. and Mrs. S. R. Brown, Yokohama (1859); Rev. and Mrs. G. F. Verbeck, Nagasaki (1859); Rev. and Mrs. James H. Ballagh, Yokohama (1861); Rev. and Mrs. Henry Stout, Nagasaki (1869), and Miss Mary E. Kidder, afterwards Mrs. E. Rothesay Miller, Yokohama (1869).

The name which stands out most prominently in the early history of the Japan Mission is that of Guido F. Verbeck. A Hollander by birth, a man of broad culture and liberal education, of sincere religious purpose, of marked ability and capacity for leadership in various fields, he left his stamp not only upon the Japan Mission of his own church, but upon the whole empire of Japan. For a period of ten years after his arrival in Nagasaki in 1859, he gave himself to the mastery of the Japanese language and to the intimate understanding of the genius of the Japanese people.

He taught in government schools; he assisted in the organization of the Imperial University in Tokyo; he became the trusted friend and adviser of men high in the councils of the empire; he was an instructor in the Theological Seminary of the mission; he was on the committees which revised the Old and New Testament; he was a preacher and

lecturer; his service to Japan extended over a period of nearly forty years, and the details of his contributions to the development of the Japanese Empire will probably never be fully known.

To the missionaries of the Dutch Church, belongs the honor of baptizing the first Protestant converts in Japan. The first person baptized in the north was a teacher of Dr. Brown and Dr. Ballagh, baptized in his sick bed, a month before his death, by Dr. Ballagh, in 1864. The story of the first converts in South Japan is deeply interesting. When the American ships visited Nagasaki in 1854, there was found in the water in Nagasaki Bay a copy of the New Testament in English. This fell into the hands of Wakasa Murata, one of the ministers of state and the governor of a well-known principality. He obtained a translation of it, and for a period of several years corresponded with Dr. Verbeck about its doctrine and meaning. A meeting between them was finally arranged, and on May 20, 1866, Dr. Verbeck baptized Wakasa and his brother, the first Protestant converts in South Japan. Dr. Verbeck refers to this period as "the period of preparation and promise," and as, "with the exception of one joyful day of harvest near its close, a time of learning and sowing."

That "joyful day of harvest" was March 10, 1872, when, as the fruit of a series of prayer meetings held in Yokohama, a church was organized by Dr. Ballagh, and nine Japanese students were baptized. They chose the name, "The Church of Christ in Japan" and this, known as the Kaigan Church, has exerted ever since a strong spiritual influence. Its building, the first to be erected in Japan, was dedicated July 10, 1875.

It is impossible in a sketch of this brief character to give a full account of the institutions which have grown up during the years. Ferris Seminary was established in Yokohama by Mrs. Miller in 1870-75. Sturges Seminary had developed into a permanent institution in Nagasaki by 1887. The Meiji Gakuin, a union school for boys and young men, carried on in both its academic and theological departments by the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches, was firmly established in Tokyo in 1886. Steele Academy was founded in Nagasaki in 1887.

It is becoming more and more the experience in foreign missionary work that in union there is the largest measure of effective service. This has been peculiarly true in Japan. From the earliest times it was desired that the missions working in Japan, of whatever denominations, should labor together for the establishment of a church which should be purely

Japanese, having no organic connection with any church in any foreign land. The missions of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches have worked steadily for this principle in Japan, and the churches under their care have taken the name, "The United Church of Christ in Japan." The success of the union has been assured from the beginning, as is shown by the rapid growth of the church. It should be said that in the beginning, and since 1917, the Japan Mission has been one organization. There was, however, before 1917, a period of about thirty years in which it was divided into the North and South Japan Missions.

Arabian Mission, 1889

Among the students in the New Brunswick Seminary in 1888-9 were James Cantine of the senior class and Samuel M. Zwemer of the middle class. They had decided to go as foreign missionaries, and were deeply interested in discussing their prospective fields. Their first meeting for such discussions was held in October, 1888, and their topic was "What constitutes a call to the foreign field?" Later they consulted their Hebrew and Arabic Professor, the Rev. John G. Lansing, D.D., who from that time became associated with their plans. They felt themselves called to pioneer work in some portion of the Mohammedan world, and they made formal application to the Board of Foreign Missions in 1889 to be sent out to Arabia. A plan was submitted to the Board by which subscriptions of from five to two hundred dollars by individuals, churches or other organizations should meet the expenses of the proposed mission. These pledges were to be payable for a term of five years, at the end of which time it was hoped that the Foreign Board would be able to undertake the support of the mission. The Board, however, was heavily in debt, and felt that it could not assume the responsibility for the new and hazardous venture. But Dr. Lansing and his zealous young colleagues felt that the call which they had heard must be obeyed, and after much thought and prayer the Arabian Mission was founded, its motto being, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before Thee!"

Arabia and the adjacent coast of Africa were determined upon as the field. A committee of advice composed of four contributors was to advance in this country the interests of the mission, which was, necessarily, to be undenominational. The mission was incorporated under the laws of New Jersey, and on October 1, 1889, James Cantine was ordained by the Classis of Kingston, and sailed for Arabia in that same

month. Samuel Zwemer was ordained by the Classis of Iowa at Orange City, and sailed to join Mr. Cantine in 1890. After making extensive tours of investigation, these two pioneer missionaries decided upon Basrah, in the Persian Gulf, as their first mission station. In December, 1892, the Rev. Peter Zwemer joined them, and in the following year Bahrein was occupied. In the year 1894 the mission was transferred to the care of the Board of Foreign Missions, Dr. H. R. L. Worrall added to the strength of the mission in 1895, and Mr. Barny in 1897. Rev. George E. Stone and Dr. Sharon J. Thoms reinforced its ranks in 1898, Rev. H. J. Wiersum in 1899, and Rev. J. E. Moerdyk in 1900.

The new century brought new recruits. Mr. Wiersum's place was filled by Rev. John Van Ess. Mrs. Zwemer had been doing a successful work for Mohammedan women since 1896. The Mason Memorial Hospital was going up in Bahrein, Muscat had been opened in 1894. Every department of the work had advanced and although two more missionaries, Mrs. Marian Wells Thoms, M.D. and Mrs. Jessie Vail Bennett, were to lay down their lives for Arabia before the new century had gone far into its first decade, the faith of the founders of the Mission had been fully justified by the results.

United Mission in Mesopotamia, 1924

Mesopotamia, the Land between the Rivers—the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, has an importance historically and, from the standpoint of its present position, politically and religiously. Mesopotamia and antiquity are two words that seem well suited to each other. Nineveh, Babylon, Ur of the Chaldees, the Garden of Eden; these take our thoughts at once back to this ancient Land between the Rivers. Old civilizations; the beginnings of the oldest arts, sciences and religions, have their roots in this soil. However, Mesopotamia's present importance lies in its part in the new political world and in the movements within its boundaries looking to a new religious life. Among the new enterprises is the United Mission in Mesopotamia, new in the sense that it is composed of workers from different Churches, supported by separate missionary societies and directed by a Joint Committee chosen from the members of the cooperating Societies.

The results of the Great War necessitated readjustments in the mission field in various parts of the world. All of Mesopotamia was fiercely fought over by the contending Turkish and English armies.

The end of the struggle found the missionary equipment in this area lost, or destroyed, and most of the missionaries scattered in other Arabic speaking fields. Under these circumstances, and faced with a shortage of men and money, the British society reluctantly decided upon a complete withdrawal, informing the neighboring American societies of its purpose.

This was the condition that appealed impressively to the missionaries of neighboring American societies, who knew the land and its people, these being the Presbyterian in Persia, to the East, and the Reformed Dutch in Arabia, to the West. Deputations from the Reformed Church Board and the Presbyterian Board visited Mesopotamia in 1920 and 1921, respectively, and made recommendations to their home Boards, looking to the occupancy of Mesopotamia.

In November, 1923, there was thus organized in New York a Joint Committee, representing the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., the Reformed Church in America and the Reformed Church in the U. S. The objective set forth was the evangelization of Moslems in the unoccupied area of Mesopotamia. In April, 1924, missionaries representing these Boards, who had already arrived in Mesopotamia, gathered in Baghdad at the time when our Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, one of the founders of the adjoining Arabian Mission, was holding a conference in that city, and organized into the United Mission in Mesopotamia, our representatives being at the time the Rev. and Mrs. James Cantine. In the course of these seven years the missionary force has been strengthened by the addition of representatives of the three cooperating Boards, and new stations have been occupied, so that there are now missionaries resident at Baghdad, the capital, Mosul, old Nineveh, the second important city, Hillah, old Babylon, in the south, Kirkuk and Dohuk, in the north, thus fairly well occupying the territory. Two schools for girls and one for boys have been established, and the present missionary force is seven missionary families and three single ladies.

Other Opportunities

Many opportunities for extending the fields of its usefulness came to the Board of Foreign Missions in the course of the years. In 1858 the Rev. Andrew Murray applied to the Board to send out missionaries to aid The Netherlands in their mission to South Africa. Two years later the Rev. Daniel Lindsey, a missionary of the American Board to the

Zulus, in Africa, preferred a similar request. In neither case could the Board give a favorable response. In 1864 there occurred a remarkable "outburst of zeal for missionary labor on a grand scale" in the Classis of Holland, Michigan and in Wisconsin. A plan was formed for building and equipping a ship that was to transport missionaries to and from their fields. The keel of the projected ship was actually laid, in the midst of great enthusiasm on the part of the churches. But the ship was never built, and nothing material can be said to have resulted. But there can be no doubt that the wave of spiritual exaltation had an influence which is felt to this day in our western churches.

The Board of Foreign Missions had an intimate connection with the Japanese students who began to come to this country in 1866. Those who first came brought letters of introduction from Dr. Verbeck, who stated that they were of "good family, and worthy of attention." This was the beginning of a movement on the part of Japanese students to come to America for their education. In the course of a few years more than five hundred Japanese young men had entered schools in the United States, at least two hundred of whom had been assisted by the Board.

In 1870 application was made to the Board to take up work in Mexico, which had to be declined. In the same year a plan for the co-operation of Foreign Mission Boards with the government in work among the Indians was submitted, and for a while adopted, the boards to advise the government agents and to superintend their work as far as possible. This also was found to be impracticable.

In 1884 the Rev. Horace G. Underwood, a graduate of the New Brunswick Theological Seminary and a member of the Reformed Church, applied to be sent by the Board as a missionary to Korea. The opening of the "Hermit Kingdom" to foreigners was arousing in all the churches a desire to attempt the evangelization of its people. It was not, however, thought possible to attempt a new mission, and the Board reluctantly closed the door of this new opportunity. Mr. Underwood was recommended to the Presbyterian Board, under which he gave many years of distinguished service in Korea.

In 1909 the Presbytery of Ceylon, representing the church established by the early Dutch settlers in that island, dating back to the same year, 1628, in which the Dutch settlers on Manhattan organized a church, applied to the Board of Foreign Missions to establish a mission.

This request was sympathetically considered and regretfully declined, for the reason that the Board felt the church was already represented in India to the limit of its ability.

Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, 1875

It was on January 21, 1875, that the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions was organized. The constitution declared that the object of the association "shall be to aid the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America by promoting its work among the women and children of heathen lands." In the beginning the activities of the new board were directed chiefly to the raising of funds to support the already existing work. Little attention was paid, at the outset, to enlarging the work on the field. Mrs. Jonathan Sturges, the honored first president of the board, besought the women not to "despise the day of small things." In the first year of the board one auxiliary agreed to support a girl in Ferris Seminary at \$60 a year. In the autumn of that year the Woman's Board appropriated \$100 each towards the salaries of Miss Talmage and Miss Van Doren of the Amoy Mission, and \$28 each for the education of two girls in the Chittoor Seminary, India. When in the autumn of the year 1875 the Woman's Board received its first application from a missionary candidate, her services had to be declined because the balance in the treasury was only \$140.70. The receipts of the Board from all sources in 1875 were \$2,891.15. That seems a far cry from today, when the treasurer's statement for the year 1931 shows receipts amounting to \$210,757.

The fiftieth anniversary of the Woman's Board was celebrated on January 21, 1925. At that time the 19 auxiliaries of 1875 had become more than a thousand. In the 50 years, \$3,193,907. had been given into the treasury. In 1875 there had been three boarding schools and two day schools. In 1925 there were fifteen boarding schools, twenty-one day schools, three social centers, medical work in twelve hospitals and dispensaries, shares in three Christian colleges and all the evangelistic work of fifty-eight women missionaries. Many buildings had been erected, including residences, boarding schools and homes. Christ had been preached to thousands in China, India and Japan. Doors had been opened in the deserts of Arabia. The Board of Foreign Missions has cause to thank God for the aid which the Woman's Board has been giving it unstintedly, and with ever-increasing vision and power.

Conclusion

A sketch covering only the initial periods of foreign missionary work is, necessarily, limited in scope. Much of interest and importance must be omitted. But no history of the Reformed Church's activities in Eastern lands, however brief, should fail to speak of the services rendered through many years to the cause of foreign missions by the Board's Secretaries, Dr. Isaac Ferris, Dr. John M. Ferris and Dr. Henry N. Cobb, to whose devotion, wisdom and ability the Church owes a larger debt than can be easily computed. Nor should mention fail to be made of the fresh zeal and enthusiasm brought to the cause, in later years, by the growing Western branch of the Church, from which many of the most devoted and effective missionaries have increasingly been drawn.

Through the united efforts of men at home and abroad had been firmly established by the beginning of the new century, the four missions of the Reformed Church in the four greatest missionary fields of the world—China, India, Japan and Arabia, the Cradle of Islam.

The Dutch Church, true to its conservative character, has concentrated its strength upon these four fields. But true, also, to the vision of its founders, it has never lost sight of its great objectives. Intensive rather than extensive in all its operations, it and its missionaries have given themselves to steady, persistent labors in the tilling of these fields. The pioneers in each have been distinguished for a scholarship which has been of priceless value to the Native Church; for a far-seeing wisdom in determining policies that has been of inestimable service to their successors; for a sympathetic understanding of the Oriental mind that has opened the way to the Oriental heart to all succeeding missionaries; for a devotion to their high calling so profound, so self-less, that we of the present day can hardly follow in their train.

The graves of many of these pioneers are in the Orient. But we see today not their dead tombs. We see their living monument, the Church of Christ in Asia, with its ten thousand communicants and its forty thousand adherents; its more than three hundred schools with twenty thousand scholars receiving Christian instruction in them; its one hundred and fifty ordained native ministers and theological students preparing for the Christian ministry; its more than one thousand native Christian assistants; its hospitals and dispensaries in which hundreds of thousands of suffering human beings are hearing of the great Healer. We

note that the native contributions towards the support of this Church last year were nearly \$30,000. We see the Reformed Church's two hundred missionaries not only working patiently, steadily in their own fields, but taking a leading part in the formation and promotion of interdenominational co-operation in mission work in the Church of Christ in China, in the South India United Church in India, in the Church of Christ in Japan, in the Mesopotamia Mission in Arabia, with their more than two hundred thousand Christian communicants.

Surely the Church which has stood firmly for three hundred years on the solid foundations laid by its own pioneers in the home land will never suffer this Monument to its missionary pioneers in the Far East to become only a Monument to the Past.

